Peace - Through Tolerance and Co-Existence

Most Ven. Madihe Pannasiha Mahanayaka Thero

1. *Na hi verena verāni – samanthī'dha kudācanaṃ*
   Averena ca sammanthi – esa dhammo sanantano.

(Dh. 5)

1. "Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love, or non-hatred alone they cease. This is an eternal law." – (An ancient principle followed by the wise of all ages.)

2. *Pare ca na vijānanthi – maya-mettha yamāmase*
   Ya ca tattha vijānanti – tato sammanthi medhagā

(Dh. 6)

2. "The others do not know (they are unaware of the fact) that we perish in this (quarrel or dispute); who foresee the outcome of such (quarrel or dispute), their quarrels cease thereby."

   Apart from the wise, the others are unaware of that they will perish in their quarrels and disputes. The wise foresee such an outcome and dispute cease thereby, and peace prevails.

3. *Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati – dukkhaṃ seti parājito*
   Upasanto sukhaṃ seti – hitvā jaya-parājayaṃ

(Dh. 201)

3. Victory breeds hatred. The defeated live in pain. Happily the peaceful live, having given up both victory and defeat."

   By defeating others one creates enemies, causes hatred in the defeated who live in sorrow. The tranquil ones who have gained inner clam through the destruction of greed, anger and jealousy, live happily abandoning both victory and defeat.

4. *Susukhaṃ vata jīvāma – verinesu averino*
Verinesu manussesu – viharāma averino.

(Dh. 197)

4. “Ah, happily do we live, without hate amongst the hateful. Amidst hateful men we dwell unhating.”

Let us live happily without hate among those who indulge in acts of hating. Amidst the hating let us indeed dwell without hate.

These four verses from the *Dhammapada* point out the path to tolerance and peaceful co-existence among men the over, and the way to world peace.

“If we were asked what religion has best promoted peace in the world, I am quite sure we could not say Christianity. Is it not plain that a candid survey of history would compel us to answer, Buddhism?”, was the view expressed by Rev. J. T. Sunderland in the Modern Review.

Buddhism, more than any other religion, has indeed contributed most towards promoting of world peace. It is the teaching of tolerance and love. It is also the doctrine of cause and effect. It places causality in a position of supreme importance within its Teaching. Without prior elimination of the cause, the effect or result cannot be nullified. If it is possible to get rid of the underlying cause, or causes that lead to war, peace becomes spontaneous, this is due to the fact that peace is diametrically opposed to war. Greed, envy and anger are the prime motives for armed hostility.

In ancient India, the river *Rohini* was the natural boundary between the Sakyan and Koliyan kingdoms. On both sides of the river the farmers made use of the waters of the *Rohini* to cultivate their fields. Water was essential for irrigation and used wisely and at the proper time, resulted in a good harvest. Mutual regard for each others’ needs led to the careful use of the water during periods of drought. On a certain such occasion however, forgetting their usual courtesy and tolerance, a minor dispute arose among the farmers regarding the sharing of the waters of river *Rohoni*. Greed and envy took hold of their

minds. On each side of the river the farmers thought thus: "were they to get water and we unable to do so, their harvest would be secure, and they would grow more prosperous." They very thought became unbearable to both parties. They were filled with jealousy and resentment that soon led to mutual hatred. Unable to control their feelings, they exchange angry words and indulged in harsh language. This minor dispute spread beyond the locality of the farming community, and gradually reached the officials of the central government. They, in their short-sightedness, hurriedly prepared for war, being themselves consumed by their own greed, envy and anger. In no time the armies of the two kingdoms were assembled on the banks of *Rohini.*

Now, it was the practice of the Blessed One every morning, at early dawn, to enter the attainment of infinite Compassion, in order to survey the worlds with His eye of purified vision, for beings who needed His help assistance that day. If He could mitigate the suffering of any unfortunate man, woman or child; if He could offer consolation to someone who needed it; If He could support with final assurance someone who on the verge of attaining the supramundane paths, He would immediately go to them, regardless of the distance or inconvenience, to fulfill His task. On this particular day, the Buddha saw the two armies of His maternal paternal kinsmen drawn up for battle on the banks of the river Rohini.

According to custom, the two kings had already arrived at the battle field, and were reviewing their respective troops, when the Buddha, leaving the Nigrodha Park in *kapilavatthu*, arrived to take His stand between the two armies. Taken by surprise at the sight of the Budha, all preparatory activities were temporarily bought to a standstill by the parties.

In the ensuing silence the Buddha addressed the two armies. "Why have you got ready for battle?" It is for the sake of water, your reverence," replied the two kings. "What is the value of water?", the Buddha asked them. "your reverence, it is of little worth," answered the kings. "And human life?", again queried Buddha. "The value of human life is incalculable" replied the kings. Then the Buddha finally addressed them. "Then, why do you want to destroy such valuable human lives for the sake of little water, the worth of which is

indeed truly insignificant?" realizing their folly, the two kings shame-facedly laid down their weapons.

The Buddha, then discoursed to them on the *Attadanda Sutta,* stressing the evil consequence of war. All those assembled, including the two kings who had decided on war through their short-sighted policy and ambition, were pacified by the words of the Buddha, and their hatred quenched there by. Outlining the benefits of peaceful harmonious coexistence, the Buddha next related the *Daddabha Jataka* (birth story), followed by the *Latukika* and *Vattaka Jatakas*. At the close of it, not only were the two assemblies (including their kings) reconciled, two hundred and fifty young men from each side were selected to be ordained as monks for the purpose of disseminating that massage of peace all over the country. One wonders weather there has been any parallel incident in the history of the world, where a religious leader has actively participated in the prevention of an outbreak of war and at the same time established peace, directly on the battlefield.

The whole world welcomes peace. Hence they frequently discuss peace. They hold peace conferences. At the same time, some of them are secretly engaged in the task of manufacturing lethal weapons capable of destroying even the whole world. They sow the seeds of greed and envy, and of hatred, (which are the main causes that lead to open aggression), throughout the world. They even make enormous profits by selling arms and war machinery to countries engaged in war.

Nevertheless, whith the development of yet another war, and the use of nuclear weapons, the imminent destruction of the world will be complete. Knowing this , the 'World Powers' have taken various steps within the past thirty five years for the preservation of the world peace. Special mention should be made here of three very important steps taken in this connection.

1. The United Nations Organization (U.N.O.)

The primary objectives of this organization are the maintenance of international peace and security, and the achievement of international co-

operation among its permanent members in matters of importance. Thirty five years have elapsed since the drafting of the U.N. Charter, and may be billions and billions of dollars have been spent during that time. A body of permanent representatives appointed from among the most distinguished men belonging to countries all over the world, assemble frequently to discuss plans for international peace and security. In times of conflict or dispute between countries, the Security Council being mainly responsible for settling such dispute, convenes special meetings for the purpose. Responsible members of the Council proceed to the spot to discuss peace proposals. In spite of all this one find little wars and big wars taking place in various parts of the world even today. This does not mean that the United Nations Organization has done nothing towards the maintenance of world peace. Twenty five years after the First World War, the Second World War broke out. Sings of yet another World War have appeared on the horizon after that, but due to the intervention of the U.N.O. with its peace talks, temporary measures of reconciliation have taken the place of open aggression. This is something to be appreciated. Still, the fact that world peace has not been maintained must be admitted by all intelligent people.

2. UNESCO

Everyone will recall the cherished ideas entertained in the producing of peace-loving citizens by means of a systematic educational programme; also to eradicate the lack of discipline in society, and to educate and inculcate peaceful ideals among the people of the world. Under this scheme, millions of rupees would have been spent. And yet indiscipline is daily on the increase among students, with the aggressive spirit of revolutionary ardour growing from day to day. This is more evident among those who are receiving higher education in universities. Everywhere there are minor conflicts, while in certain place one finds even major outbreaks of indiscipline and disobedience. Strikes, for the most pretty reasons, are a common feature among college and university students. Conflict with authority resulting in rowdy demonstrations,

have become the fashion of the day. Even governments have been toppled. This situation is daily deteriorating in various parts of the world.

Threats and strike, with picketing of institutions, which is usual *modus operandi* employed by the working class in the solving of labour problems, should not be utilized in resolving problems of the educated youth of country. Yet these very things have crept into even the lower grads of secondary schools today. In this, however, neither the students nor the youth are to be blamed. It is the result of a faulty educational system, lacking emphasis given to discipline and character-formation. One cannot say that UNESCO has failed entirely in its purpose. Within its educational programme, in the field of education itself, it has gained rapid and far-reaching results. But the long-awaited establishment of the world peace still remains to be accompanied.

3. Olympic Games

Participation in sports and other activities leads to physical fitness, provided recreation, and promotes healthy competition between individuals as well as teams. Lack of discrimination is an outstanding feature of such activities, this is, and has always been so. Hence every government in every country, spending vast sums of money, provides facilities for sport in every school every village, and every town. Inter-house competitions, inter-school meets, village contests, and continental meets have been inaugurated as far back as one may remember, culminating in the Olympic Games. This is a world event.

In this past, until quite recently all participants in such games and other competitive activities accepted both victory and defeat with equal composure, hardly ever disputing the decision of judges and umpires. Today, it is a different story altogether. At the end of any inter-house or inter school sports meet, both players and spectators may often be seen including on rowdy horse-play and use of rude language. Peace, together with the day’s pleasure has been destroyed. Most inter-school games today end in scuffles many villages meets. Inter-national games are not immune either, similar scenes may be witnessed in the aftermath of such events.

The Test Match series between England and Australia have always been given world-wide publicity for its show of true sportsmanship and good manners, has undergone a radical change today. The Olympic play-playground has already become the venue for crime and murder. In spite of spirit of healthy competition, of ‘give and take’ of a very high order, there still remains much to be done. The long-awaited peace that will truly be permanent is yet to be.

Thus, not one of these three measures taken to promote peace, has succeeded in bringing about World Peace, as every intelligent man will admit today.

How could World Peace be achieved according to Buddhist teaching? It is through creating peace within the individual. Greed, envy, and hatred, which undermine the growth of peace, should be overcome through the practice of Virtue, Concentration, and Wisdom. Greed, envy and hatred may be each divided into the following three stages according to function. The Active (*vītikkama*) stage is actual action and speech arising through greed etc. The Exited (*pariyuṭṭhāna*) stage is the assertion of greed etc. over their opposite counter-parts. The Latent (*anusaya*) stage is the latent existence of these mental defilements within oneself. Greed, envy and hatred, may be overcome in the active stage through virtue (*sīla*), in the exited stage through concentration (*Samādhi*); and in the latent stage through wisdom (*paññā*)

*4. Virtue (***sīla***)*

Virtue means restraint or self discipline. It is the controlling of action and speech. Practice of virtue begins with the observing of the Five Precepts (*pañcasīla*). It ends with training in the Four-fold Purification of Virtue (*catu-parisuddda sīla*). The five evil actions are killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and the taking of intoxicating drinks. Virtue is refraining from the above five evil actions. The development of virtue leads to the control of greed, envy and hatred.

The practice and perfection of virtue, while safeguarding the human qualities of a man, also leads to the obtaining of the following benefits.

He comes into a largo fortune.

A fair name is spread abroad.

He enters an assembly of nobles (*Kashtriyas*) without fear.

He dies unconfused.

After death, he is born in a heavenly world.

(Visuddhi Magga)

5. Concentration (samādhi)

Concentration is the unification of the mind obtained through restraint of the five sense-faculties, with mind-fulness focused on a single profitable object. Concentration leads to tranquility of mind. When the mind is tranquil one is able to suppress greed, envy and hatred or varying periods of time, depending on the strength of that tranquility. With further development of concentration inner peace arises spontaneously within the individual, paving the way to external peace.

6. Wisdom (paññā)

Wisdom is the understanding of a thing as it truly is, and not as it appears to be. It is full comprehension of the five aggregates of mentality and materiality, tranquility or calm is already found in such a person. When wisdom is enjoined to this, one truly becomes a man of peace, incapable of hurting another, even in thought.

Universal love (metta) as taught in Buddhism is a primary condition of world peace. Universal love is so-called because it is diffused to all beings in all directions, throughout the universe. This love that has no limit is spread to beings both human and divine, to animals and birds, and even to the meanest creatures that make this world and other worlds their home, and to man irrespective of his caste and colour, creed and nationality.

Human inhabitants of this world should be divided into four categories- oneself, the dear, the natural, and the hostile. Love should be extended to all four groups in equal measure without discrimination. Just as a mother protects her only child, even so should one practice love towards all beings. This is the teaching of the Buddha.

Further, Buddhism teaches that one should look on all beings as one's own kin. There is no being in this world who has not been a mother, a father, a child, a brother or a sister, to one drifting in this sea of *saṃsāric* existence. Greed, envy and hatred will decrease in a society diffused by loving-kindness. There will be no room for such defilements. There will be only peace.

In ancient times, it was customary practice for kings to wage war for various reasons. Hence Buddhist kings too made war on the slightest pretext, in order to annexe extra territories. The great king *Asoka* who had earlier fought many such battles in his greed for adding new lands to his mighty empire, later realized the evil consequences that accompanied war. Conquest of territory (*disā-vijaya*) meant the destruction of valuable human lives. Realizing his folly, the great king gave up the conquest of territories for the conquest of Truth (*dhamma-vijaya*). He became a follower of the Buddha's teaching. Establishing himself in virtue, he won the hearts of his subjects through his virtuous conduct and moral activities. With his heart filled with love, the great king Asoka, who looked on all men as his children- '*save manuse pajā mama*' – established a harmonious state of peace throughout his realm.

"*Pūjetaya tu eva parapāsanda tena prakaranena, evaṃ karuṃ attapāsanda ca vadhayati para-pāsada-sa ca upakaroti'*- "even leaders of other religions are worthy of respectful homage, for various reasons. This brings increase in honour to one's own, and helpful service to them." Thinking of the religionists, and discussing ways and means of helping them, and then acting accordingly, - he brought about goodwill and amity between all religions. 'Sama vayo eva sadhu' – concord itself is desirable." - with this clarion call he set about spreading the massage of goodwill and peace throughout his empire and outside it, in place far and near, among the rich and poor, the high and the low.

In order to convey this massage of peace and goodwill, Asoka sent his own ministers and missionaries to all countries with whom he had established mutual relations, to disseminate the teaching of the Buddha. These included Sri Lanka, Greece, Central Asia, Syria, Egypt, Corinth, Cyrene and

Macedonia. Peace prevailed in all these countries, and even the name of war was unheard of for a very long long time. H. G. Rawlinson makes the following observation in his Legacy of India (p. 11) that these Buddhist missionaries were sent not merely to propagate Buddhism but to promote world peace. " Asoka's object was not merely to promulgate Buddhism, but to establish a 'world peace' and to prevent repetition of tragedies like the Kalinga massacre, which had led to his conversion."

One should now consider the question as to how world peace could be brought about through education based on Buddhist principles. The regeneration of the individual alone will lead to the regeneration of a country or a nation. An education along Buddhist lines is the answer to this. Buddhist education means an education that is based on the fundamental principles of Buddhism. That means discipline and obedience, with unbounded respect for authority. The Buddha disparaged ignorance and commended knowledge. Yet he gave priority to the humanity in man. If one lacks learning and yet possesses humane qualities, he does not become a nuisance to society. On the other hand, one who is learned and yet lacking in humanity becomes not only a nuisance to society, but also a destructive liability to his country. If one has both learning and the qualities of human being he is to be compared to a piece of pure river-gold. An education along Buddhist lines does not prevent one from acquiring unlimited knowledge together with the development of virtue and other humane qualities. On the other hand it helps one to do so. One who receives such an education is able to control his greed, as well as his envy and hatred. It will lead to inner clam in the individual.

Buddhists were the pioneers of University education in the world. According to European history the first university to be set up in the West was the one at Bologna in Italy in the 11th century. This was followed by the University at Sorbonne on Paris. The oxford and Cambridge Universities came into being later. In the East, the ancient university at Nalanda of the Buddhists was started in the second century. In spite of its Buddhist administration, student from various countries, of various nationalities and religions were admitted to the University at Nalanda. A distinctive features of

this Buddhist University whose numerical strength (of its combined staff and students), would be ten thousand at any one time, was the very high discipline and harmonious atmosphere that prevailed there. This University education was maintained for over seven hundred years.

Many scholars have done research on the University at Nalanda. Foremost among them was *Lord Zetland*. Expressing his ideas in relation to one aspect of this university he says. “The discipline among students was of such high order that for the 700 years of its existence. There has not been a single instance of breach of disciplinary rules within the university. And this in spite of a resident capacity of nearly ten thousand students and teachers, of various races, religions and nations. One may indeed come to the conclusion clearly and without bias, that is no better way than an education based on Buddhist principles for dispelling the indiscipline, unrest and disorder in the modern world and promoting peace and concord among its people.”

In the *catukka nipāta* of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, on the discourse known as the *Paṭipadā Sutta*, the Buddha has shown four paths, of which the fourth is the path of Calm (*sama paṭipadā*). In it, he has made clear how one many gain peace of mind though the calming down of thoughts of lust and other defilements of the mind. Though the expulsion of greed, envy and hatred (which are the main causes that lead to war) from the mind of the individual, peace will automatically ensue.

In this way, Where ever such an individual lives, that home will have a peaceful atmosphere. A village consisting of such homes will be a peaceful village. A town in which there are such villages will be a peaceful town. A country in which there are such towns or cities will be a peaceful country. A world in which the peoples of all nations live in peace will be peaceful world.

Seeing thus, that it is individual peace that leads to a world at peace, and that it is by bringing inner peace to man that world at peace can be ensured, one should set about the task regeneration peaceful individual. This should be done, as a priority measure, not in lieu of but in addition to the convening of peace conferences are offered here for careful consideration.

1. The UNESCO should set up an educational system with appropriate provision for individual training in moral discipline and character formation. This programme should run concurrently with the normal academical courses, thus creating a world of peace-conscious individual among its youth and child populations.
2. The U.N.O. should make an effort to instil into the hearts of both young and old alike, the four sublime mental states of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karunā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The cultivation of these four mental states as given in the teaching of the Buddha, will lead mankind into a world of non-violence and tolerance universal love and peace.

   It should further try to inculcate the four wholesome based of social integration (*sangha vatthu*) among the various peoples on all levels (or strata) of society, within control. These for basic acts of conduct, according to the teaching of the Buddha, are the following.

The practice of generosity; giving; sharing with others (*dāna*).
The use of pleasant or courteous speech or language (*piya vacana*)
Conduct that is wise, as well as altruistic by nature (*attha cariyā*)
Belief in the equality of man; the practice of impartiality (*samānattatā*)

With the cultivation of moral excellence, and the development of a righteous society, PEACE on a world wide or universal scale will automatically follow.

From: The young Buddhist 1982
The journal of the Singapore Buddha yana organization.



"Through meditation the human mind develops itself both morally and spiritually, resulting reducing social disharmony and insurrection which arise

first in the minds of men and then put into action. Peace and progress of a country is thus assured.

In this modern world although highly advanced in science and technology, with its rapid expansion of knowledge, there appears to be a steady deterioration of human values. Present day politics, the economy and educational systems are some of the more important reasons for this state of affairs. In this context it is considered desirable that the existing political and economic thought and educational system should be changed so as to give priority to the development of human values.

Buddhism is both a path of emancipation and a way of life. As a way of life it interacts with the economic, political and social belief and practices of the people. It is felt that the time is now most opportune to make known to the world each of the above aspects of society within the frame work of Buddhist Ethics and the basic principles of Buddhism."

From: the forward of "This confused society"

Typist: Mr. Eranga Sanjeewa